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CRITICAL
REMARKS

ON

Sir CHARLES GRANDISON,

CLARISSA *and* PAMELA.

ENQUIRING,

Whether they have a Tendency to corrupt
or improve the Public Taste and Morals.

IN A

LETTER to the AUTHOR.

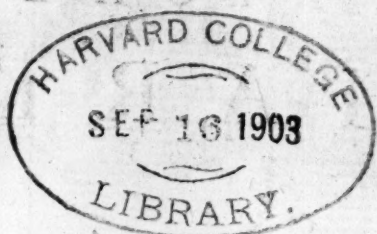
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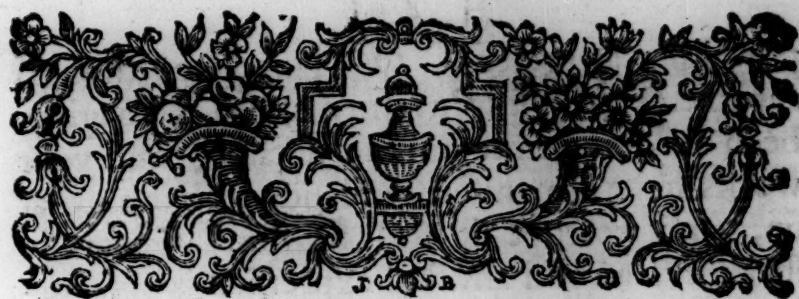
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Critical Remarks, &c.

S I R,



Hope you will take nothing amiss that may be said in the following remarks on your compositions ; I firmly believe that your motive in writing them was a laudable intention to promote and revive the declining causes of religion and virtue. And when I have said so much, I have surely a right from you to the same favourable interpretation of my design, in publishing these Considerations on them, and endeavouring to shew how far you have fallen short of your commendable purpose.

That your writings have in a great measure corrupted our language and taste, is a truth that cannot be denied. The consequences abundantly shew it. By the extraordinary success you have met with, if you are not to be reckoned a classical author, there is certainly a very bad taste

prevailing at present. Our language, though capable of great improvements, has, I imagine, been for some time on the decline, and your works have a manifest tendency to hasten that on, and corrupt it still farther. Generally speaking, an odd affected expression is observable through the whole, particularly in the epistles of Bob Lovelace. His many new-coin'd words and phrases, Grandison's *meditatingly*, Uncle Selby's *scrupulosities*, and a vast variety of others, all of the same Stamp, may possibly become current in common Conversation, be imitated by other writers, or by the laborious industry of some future compiler, transferred into a Dictionary, and sanctioned by your great Authority. Your success has farther corrupted our taste, by giving birth to an infinite series of other compositions all of the same kind, and equally, if not more, trifling than your's. A catalogue of them would look like a Bible genealogy, and were I to undertake the task of giving it, I should be obliged to invoke the muse, as Homer does before he begins the catalogue of the ships in his second Iliad. How long the currency of such compositions may continue, how many may be annually poured forth from the press, is more than any man can say, without being endued with the spirit of prophecy. But, without making any such pretensions, I can foretel, that if ever a good taste universally prevails, your romances, as well as all others, will be as universally neglected,
and

and that in any event their fate will not be much better ; for what recommends them to the notice of the present age is, their novelty, and their gratifying an idle and insatiable curiosity. In a few years that novelty will wear off, and that Curiosity will be equally gratified by other Compositions, it may be, as trifling, but who will then have the additional charm of novelty, to recommend them. Such, Sir, must be the fate of all works which owe their success to a present capricious humor, and have not real intrinsic worth to support them.

Short-lived then as they are, and must be, in their own nature, it might be thought cruel to hasten them to the grave, could that be effected by any thing I have in my power to say, if they did not prevent the success, and stifle in the birth, works which have a just title to life, fame and immortality. Human genius is pretty much the same in all ages and nations, but its exertion, and its displaying itself to advantage, depend on times, accidents, and circumstances. There are, no doubt, writers in the present age, who, did they meet with proper encouragement, might be capable of producing what would last to posterity, and be read and admired by them. We have some good poets, such as the authors of *Elfrida*, the *Church-yard Elegy*, and the *Poem on Agriculture* ; a performance which would have been highly valued in an Augustan age, and is the best, perhaps the only Georgic in our language.

By

By the great manner in which the author has executed the first part of his noble plan, he has shewn himself sufficiently able for the rest; but by his not prosecuting it, I imagine he has not met with the deserved success. This may possibly be imputed to its coming abroad at an improper time. I remember it was first advertised just when the Memoirs of Sir Charles Grandison were appearing by piece-meal. This was a very injudicious step, for who could be supposed to attend to any thing else, when the lovely Harriet Byron continued in suspense, when the fate of Lady Clementina was undetermined, when it was not yet settled, whether she was to marry Grandison, retire to a Nunnery, or continue crack-brain'd all her lifetime. After all, I am well-pleased to see Grandison and Harriet fairly buckled. And I hope soon to hear, that the ceremony is performed between the Count de Belvedere and Lady Clementina. I am afraid there could have been no compleat happiness in the matrimonial union of the English Gentleman and the Italian Lady. The marriage state may be aptly enough compared to two fiddles playing in concert: if the one can sound no higher than Tweedle-dum, and the other no lower than Tweedle-dee, there never can be any thing but a perpetual jarring discord and dissonance betwixt them. In the same manner the difference in religious sentiments would have been a great alloy in the felicity of that illustrious couple.

I now

I now proceed, Sir, to the principal business of this address, which is, to enquire how far your writings have contributed to promote the causes of religion and virtue, for which, as you say, and I believe, they were chiefly intended.

It is, no doubt, the indispensable duty of every writer to promote, as far as lies in his power, in the society, of which he is a member, the advancement of virtue, especially the moral and social duties of mutual good-will and universal benevolence. And as far as the established religious system of a country has the same tendency, so far is every man, who writes a popular treatise, let his private sentiments, with respect to the pretensions it makes to truth and a divine original, be what they will, obliged to recommend it to the belief of the people. It is equally his duty, if not more so, to inculcate on their minds a reverence and regard for the established religious corporation, and to avoid saying or doing any thing which may subject them to ridicule and contempt. It must be owned, that your conduct in these articles, especially the last, cannot be sufficiently commended. Your works are designed for the perusal of people in all ranks, they have had an universal run, and in them you have not only shewn yourself a pious Christian, and a good *Bible-scholar*, but you have made all your heroines the same, and have besides introduced the Characters of several pious and worthy

worthy clergymen, and represented them acting in very advantageous lights. For these things, as I observed just now, you cannot be more than enough applauded; and no doubt your writings have in so far produced a good effect; but I am afraid you have not acted consistently throughout, for you have not only brought in your hero Lovelace, but Mr. Moden, the only virtuous male character in your *Clarissa*, expressing contempt for the clergy. Now, in my opinion, a virtuous man, and we have had several instances of that kind among the ancients, may very consistently despise the public religion, but he will never allow himself to bring the order belonging to it under contempt. In fact, it is the clergy alone who render a public religion useful and valuable, let its divine original be a truth never so evident, it could have no influence upon the people, unless they should be catechized and instructed in it by the clergy; and though we should suppose it downright nonsense, yet that order of men must always be reckoned a venerable and necessary institution, in as far as they are teachers of moral duties to the people, and recommend to them the practice of virtue, either by precept or example.

Another thing in which I humbly conceive you have been in the wrong, is this: you constantly express a great virulence against those whom you call sentimental unbelievers, and take all opportunities to render them the objects
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of public odium and detestation. You cannot but be sensible, that such a conduct is contrary to the first and great duties of social virtue. Ought you to quarrel with any man because he is taller or shorter, fairer or blacker than yourself? And yet we can no more help our differing in speculative opinions than in stature or complexion. If you happen to feel the knowledge and perception of divine things supernaturally implanted on your mind, rejoice and be happy, but let not your Wrath arise against those who are not blest with the same sensations. Would you be angry with any man because his eye-sight cannot distinguish objects at such a great distance as yours? Why then quarrel with another for a deficiency of the same kind in spiritual optics? No doubt you will assert, that the truth of the present religious system may be proved by a long connected chain of demonstrative arguments. But if I might be allowed, without offence, to give my opinion in this matter, as far as you are concerned, I should say, that such an assertion is in you unbecoming, as well as the conduct you observe in consequence unjust and imprudent. The assertion is in you unbecoming, because, whatever you may think, the question, whether there was ever a divine revelation given, or a miracle wrought, or whether, supposing such things done, they can be proved to the conviction of a rational unprejudiced man, by moral evidence, and human testimony, requires more learning and judgment than you

are possessed of, to determine with any precision. It requires, indeed, the greatest and most universal skill and knowledge in nature and her philosophy, which has not come to your share, as appears from your writings, where, as may easily be perceived, you retail all that little you have pickt up. The more knowledge a man has, he will always be the less assuming; and a positive stiffness, especially in commonly-received opinions, is a certain sign and constant attendant of ignorance. Socrates, the wisest man among the wisest people, after all his researches declared, that all that he knew was, that he knew nothing. Cicero, the greatest master of reason that ever lived, was a professed academic or sceptist. And a learned and virtuous modern, whom I forbear to name, in a letter to an intimate friend, confessed, that the more he thought, he found the more reason to doubt, and had always been more successful in discovering what was false, than what was true. Those illustrious three, learned, virtuous, and lovers of their country, to whom it would be difficult, perhaps impossible, to add a fourth, were all sentimental unbelievers, and all at the same time inculcated a reverence and regard to the established religions of their respective countries. Nay, all sentimental unbelievers, had they not been provoked by the ill-judged bigotry of their adversaries, would have adhered unanimously to the same maxims. If their unbelief proceeds from a consciousness of the weakness and limited state of the human

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man understanding, the constant result of true learning and philosophy, they will be the more firmly convinced of the great utility and absolute necessity of a public form of worship, and a religious corporation, and uniformly square their conduct accordingly. It was therefore unjust, as well as imprudent, in you, Sir, who are a popular writer, and whose works are read by every body, to endeavour to render sceptical free-thinkers, from their own principles the fastest and sincerest friends to religion in general, the objects of odium and detestation to the believers in that particular religion, which happens to be at present established by law. This, Sir, and I shall say no more, I hope may be said, from general principles, without offence to any party, without determining or declaring my own sentiments, which are in the right, and which in the wrong, with respect to the truth of their opinions.

I now proceed to the last thing proposed in these remarks, to examine how far your compositions have a natural tendency to advance virtue. They are all strictly dramatical, and therefore, whether they have a good or a bad tendency, they must exert themselves with a stronger influence on the minds of those who are affected by them. In all works of this kind, in order to make them truly valuable and useful, all, at least one of these three things ought to be done. First, by the constitution of the plot or the fable, some great and useful

moral ought to be enforced and recommended. In the second place, the characters which are introduced ought to be so contrived, that the readers should be induced to imitate their virtues, or avoid their vices.* Or, lastly, some one great moral virtue ought to be inculcated, by making it the characteristic of the Hero, or the chief person in the dramatic work. In these, as in every other species of poetry and composition, the divine Homer has excelled all other writers, he reigns unrivalled in them all, and will for ever be without a competitor; insomuch, that one certain way of judging the merit or demerit of all other authors, is, to enquire how near they have approached, or how far they have fallen short of this standard of perfection in writing. I shall now examine how far you, in your several performances, have succeeded, with respect to these articles, in the same order wherein they are set down. I have perused your late work, Grandison, carefully, and I hope impartially, with this view, and for my Heart I cannot so much as perceive the least shadow of either plot, fable, or action. If there are any, they certainly lie far out of the reach of my gross observation. Obvious they are not, which they ought to be to the most common reader. It may, indeed, be said, that no certain judgment can be formed of it, in that respect, till the whole is compleated. But it is no difficult matter to make probable conjectures about the contents of the volume still
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in embrio. We shall probably be entertained with a description of the nuptials between Lady Clementina and the Count de Belvedere; that happy couple, with Signor Jeronymo, and the rest of the Porretta family, will certainly pay a visit to Grandison and his admired Harriet; Beauchamp will be married to *that rogue* Emily, in whom he already *meditates his future wife*; the *good doctor* Bartlet may possibly pick up the dowager Lady Beauchamp; but if the dowager Lady should chuse a younger bedfellow, a match may be made up between him and *old aunt* Nell; or if *old aunt* Nell should continue obstinately determined against matrimony, the *good doctor* and *grandmama* Shirley may go to church together. And now, Sir, though all these desirable events should be happily accomplished, I should still be of the same opinion; nor can I see any moral that could be drawn from them, unless it be this, that men and women, old and young, after a certain ceremony is performed, may go to bed together, without shame or scandal, or any fear of being called to account for so doing by the churchwardens. The plot and fable of your Pamela may indeed be easily enough discovered. They consist in Mr. B.'s attempts to debauch his beautiful waiting-maid; in her resistance, and their happy nuptials. If we look for a moral, we shall find the only one that can be extracted out of it to be very ridiculous, useless, and impertinent;

✓✓ nent; it appears to be this, that when a young gentleman of fortune cannot obtain his ends of a handsome servant girl, he ought to marry her; and that the said girl ought to resist him, in expectation of that event. Thus it is manifest, that these two compositions are equally below criticism, in this article, and, to do you justice, it must be confessed, that your Clarissa is as much above it. When considered in this light, it seems to be entirely Homeric. That divine poet, in his Iliad, has inculcated by one fable, and in the continuation of one action, two great and noble morals. The first is, that discord among chiefs or allies engaged in a confederacy, ruins their common designs, and renders them unsuccessful; and the second, that concord and agreement secure them prosperity in all their undertakings. ✓✓ In the same manner, in the first part of Clarissa, we find the bad consequences of the cruel treatment of parents towards their children, and forcing their inclinations in marriage; and in the second part, we see a fine example of the pernicious effects of a young lady's reposing confidence or engaging in correspondence with a man of profligate and debauched principles. ✓✓ I do not at present recollect any composition which, view'd in this light, can be compared with the Iliad and Clarissa. The morals of the first are of the utmost importance in public life, and those of the last in private life. If the little states and republics of Greece, for

for whom Homer's poems were originally calculated, had adhered uniformly to their maxims, they would have been invincible, and must have subsisted to this day in all their glory and splendor. In the same manner, if the morals contained, and so admirably enforced by example, in your Clarissa, had their due weight, a vast variety of mischiefs and miseries in private life would be prevented. There is nothing in which parents are apter to stretch their authority too far, than in the article of marriage; there is nothing in which they pay less regard to the happiness of their children; nothing in which they allow less to the influence of passion and inclination in them; and nothing in which they are more sway'd by the dirty grovelling passions of vanity, pride, and avarice, themselves. On the other hand, there is nothing in which young ladies, even of the greatest modesty and discretion, more readily fall into errors. It is pretty certain, that where they are allowed freely to follow their own biases, they generally prefer either real or reputed rakes, to men of a regular life and more sober deportment. I have often been puzzled in endeavouring to account for this conduct in the female world, so entirely contrary to what all of them think their real and most valuable interests. I have sometimes been tempted to impute it to the truth of this satirical maxim in the poet,

That every woman is at heart a rake,

and

and that, custom and education having deterred them from the practice, they cannot help loving the theory in themselves, and preferring the practice in others. But I rather incline to attribute it to a cruel and unjust policy in the other sex, who have deceived and bubbled them in this, as well as several other articles, and have persuaded them of the truth of this notable maxim, that rakes make the best husbands, than which, as experience abundantly testifies, nothing can be more false. A rake, indeed, may be a good husband while the honey-moon lasts, for so long, perhaps, may novelty have a charm; but when that is ended, the lust of variety, the distinguishing characteristic of a rake, haunts him incessantly, like a ghost, and soon extinguishes all his principles of love, justice, and generosity. It is true, indeed, the proverb goes, that a reformed rake makes the best husband. It may be so, but then it is a truth of equal importance with this, that a pick-pocket going to the gallows is an honest man. His hands are tied behind him, and he has it not in his power to be otherwise; in the same manner a reformed rake is honest, because he has lost the ability to be otherwise, and he naturally fondles and doats upon his wife, that she may overlook deficiencies in more essential articles. He acts entirely from the same principles with those profuse and liberal old keepers, who are said to pay for what they cannot do.

Should

Should we now examine how you have succeeded in contriving your characters, so as to be fit objects of imitation, if virtuous, and if vicious, so as to be proper examples for deterring others from the like practices, we shall find the principal ones extremely faulty, generally quite destitute of poetical probability, and in a word, far short of the Homeric standard. Homer's characters are for the most part drawn beyond the life; but the art with which he has reduced them to truth, and probability, is surprising. He has prodigiously exaggerated the bodily strength of Ajax, but then he has rendered all probable, by representing him of dull and heavy intellects. For it is a fact, that, with bulky unwieldy force, we generally connect the idea of a slow understanding. How consistently prudent is Ulysses, thro' the whole of his character; we never see him err thro' rashness, but rather commit faults, thro' an over caution. How wonderfully are we reconciled to the great garrulity of the venerable Nestor, which would be inexcusable, did we not reflect, at the same time, on his extreme old age, of which the poet never fails to remind us? How readily do we excuse the ferocity of Achilles, when we reflect that the generous youth prefers a short life, with fame and reputation, to a length of days, with peace and happiness? How artfully are we prevented from being shocked at his cruelty, in slaughtering without distinction, or remorse, all who

come in his way? when we are told that he himself is acting under the certainty of meeting his death before the Trojan Wall? In short, Homer is possessed of this peculiar secret, to contrive and add such circumstances that render all his characters probable, and to blend vices and virtues of a similar quality so together, as to render them all uniformly consistent. And now tho' I confess, with pleasure, that you are far from being destitute of merit, in some of the characters you draw, yet you seem to be intirely unacquainted with this secret. In order to illustrate my assertion, I shall run thro' your principal characters in a cursory and desultory manner.

In Grandison, you have endeavoured to give an example of universal goodness and benevolence. But I am afraid you have strained and stretched that character too far; you have furnished him with too great a variety of accomplishments, some of them destructive, at least not so consistent with the principal and most shining virtue. *The man is every thing*, as Lucy or Harriet says; which no man ever was, or will be. Homer in the *Odyssy*, and in the character of Euemæus, has given an example of universal benevolence; but then he represents him an entire rustic, living constantly in the country, shunning all public concourse of men, the court especially, and never going thither, but when obliged to supply the riotous luxury and extravagance of the suitors. Mr.

Fielding

Fielding has imitated these circumstances, as far as was consistent with our manners, in the character of Allworthy, and has with admirable judgment denied him an university education, made him a great lover of retirement, seldom absent from his country seat, never at the metropolis but when called by business, and constantly leaving it, when that was over. The ingenious authorefs of David Simple, perhaps the best moral romance that we have, in which there is not one loose expression, one impure, one unchaste idea; from the perusal of which, no man can rise unimproved, has represented, her hero, a character likewise of universal benevolence, agreeably to the part he was to act; of tender years, quite unimproved by education, unexperienced, and ignorant of the ways of the world. Should we now consider the matter a little deeply, we shall find a reason in nature for the practice of these just painters of men and manners. A human creature, in a simple unimproved state, is naturally generous and benevolent; but when he comes abroad into the world, and observes the universal depravity of morals, and the narrow selfishness that every where prevail, according to his particular temper or circumstances, he is either contaminated by the example, or contracts a misanthropical disposition, and hates or despises the greatest part of his species. There may be, and no doubt there are, men who have seen the world, who have been conversant, even in

courts, during their whole lives, who yet have retained and exercised humane and benevolent dispositions; but such characters are very rare, and, for the reasons above specified, never can be poetically probable. Such, Sir, is your Grandison; he seems never to have enjoyed retirement, to have been abroad almost all his life-time, to have seen all the courts in Europe, and been conversant, with the great, rich, and powerful, in all nations. You represent him likewise to be a man universally learned, and tell us, at the same time, in capital letters, that SIR CH. GRAN. is a CHRISTIAN; and that too, in the strictest and most bigotted sense of the word; for he refuses the woman he loves, for a difference in religious principles. This, in my humble opinion, is likewise an inconsistency, for universal learning naturally leads to scepticism, and the most useful, as well as solid branch of human knowledge, consists in knowing how little can be known.' There are several other inconsistencies in his character, particularly in some of his duelling stories; besides, at any rate, his benevolence has something showy and ostentatious in it; nothing in short of that graceful and beautiful nature which appears in Fielding's Allworthy.

The character of Lovelace is yet more inconsistent, still more deficient in poetical probability, and indeed intirely contradictory to Homer and nature. In all Homer's works, there are not two characters between whom
there

there is a greater contrast and opposition, than between those of Achilles and Ulysses. They enjoy no quality in common, but that of valour; and the valour of the one is as different from that of the other, as can well be imagin'd; for they all along partake of their general characters, and are consistent with them. But you, Sir, who, in the mouth of Harriet Byron and that *dear flighty creature* Lady G. sometimes take upon you to criticize that great master of nature, shew that you have either never studied him, or profited very little by him; for in this one character of Lovelace, you have united these two dissimilar and discordant characters of Achilles and Ulysses; you have given him all the fierceness, cruelty, and contempt of laws, impetuosity, rashness, in short, all the furious ungovernable passions of the one, and have at the same time provided him with all the cunning, craft, dissimulation, and command over his passions, which so much distinguish the other. How to reconcile to probability, or even to possibility, the existence of such opposite and contradictory qualities in one human bosom, is a task which I leave to you.

The fine, or rather the *naughty gentleman*, in your Pamela, to whom Mr. Fielding very properly gives the surname of Booby, is indeed one of the greatest bubbles, and blunderers that one can meet withal. You have informed us, that he had been a great rake, and had debauched several women; 'tis well you have
done

done so, but he certainly had made little proficiency in that laudable science, for, from his whole behaviour towards his Pamela, one should be apt to think him the meereft novice in the world. He opens trenches before her properly enough, by giving her silk stockings and fine cloaths to feed her pride and vanity ; but when he comes to make a more direct attack in the summer-house, how sheepishly does he act, and what blunders does he not commit ? He attempts to kiss her, the girl, as is natural, struggles, and grows angry ; he lets her go, and bribes her, with five guineas, to keep the secret. This was knocking his project in the head at once ; and had he been guilty of no other blunders, as he was of innumerable, was sufficient to ruin his cause with her for ever. He was not to expect, that a girl, piously educated, would surrender at the very first, especially to a summons given in so blunt and indelicate a manner ; on the contrary, he ought to have laid his account with meeting a good deal of anger and resistance ; to have born all, with patience, and laughed off his attempt for an innocent frolic ; and if she threatened to inform Mrs. Jervis, to have bidden her do so, and told her, that he would kiss Mrs. Jervis and her both. In which case she never would have opened her lips about the matter ; in every succeeding attempt, he would have met with less and less resistance, till at last he might have accomplished his desires, before Miss Pamela had
certainly

certainly known what he would be at. But by his offering to bribe her to silence, he betrayed all his designs, and informed her she had a secret to keep, which unless she had been constitutionally vicious, it was impossible for her not to disclose. Mr. Booby shews likewise the utmost ignorance of human nature, in thinking to gain his ends with a young and innocent girl by the force of money. All young girls are taught to put a value on their virginity, and unless debauched by their own sex, they never will part with it, but to those they like. None but well-disciplin'd ladies of the town are to be gained upon by meer money; and Mr. Booby, by the whole of his conduct, appears to be nothing but a downright Covent-garden rake. He was resolved to have Pamela, and marriage was indeed the only way left for him. This your first performance concludes with that happy event, and having sold well, I imagine you was induced to continue the story. But had I undertaken that task, without violating the probability or the consistency of the characters, I should have introduced Parson Williams very fairly making a cuckold of Booby, and providing him with an heir to his estate, which is the way all such Boobies ought to be treated, and a proper catastrophe for all such preposterous matches. ✓

Your three Heroines are, Pamela, Harriet, and Clarissa, ladies all renowned for chastity and *Bible-scholarship*. The chastity of the first was ✓

✓ was from beginning to end never well attackt,
 ✓ and the defence she made is so far from being
 extraordinary, that had she surrendered at dis-
 cretion, it ought to have been reckoned mira-
 culous. There is nothing very characteristick
 about Harriet, yet is she a good sort of a girl
 enough, especially as times go. *The men are*
junk, and the women barely swim, saith the live-
 ly Charlotte Grandison. But the character of
 Clarissa is, indeed, admirable throughout the
 whole. Nature and propriety are not only
 strictly observed, but we see the greatest no-
 bleness of soul, generosity of sentiments, filial
 affection, delicacy, modesty, and every female
 virtue, finely maintained and consistently con-
 spicuous all along. The circumstances which
 induced her noble and generous spirit to con-
 tract a liking for Lovelace, are finely imagin'd;
 her delicacy and reserve, her disgust at his teaz-
 ing ways, after she was in his power, are natu-
 rally to be expected from a woman of her su-
 perior accomplishments. There is something
 excessively pathetic, and even sublime, in her
 first address to him, after she was betrayed;
 her constant refusal of his proffer'd hand, her
 resignation to her fate, and her behaviour to her
 hard-hearted relations, are all equally noble,
 and all natural in a Clarissa. Her character,
 in short, is such, that unless one should be
 hunting for faults, scarce any can be found;
 and perhaps it is owing to such a disposition in
 me, that I cannot help observing she is rather
 too

too good, at least too methodically so: The division of her time, and her diary had been better omitted; all such things detract from the nature and simplicity of a character. The characters of her family are finely marked and distinguished, and well adapted for bringing on the catastrophe. There is something likewise extremely noble and generous in the friendship between Clarissa and Miss Howe. But I must here observe, that in this, your capital performance, you seem in a good measure to have exhausted your invention with respect to characters. For instance, that *dear flighty creature* Lady G. is nothing else but a second edition of *Madam Howe's lively daughter*. They are both wits, and have both high notions of female prerogative, and the pre-eminence of their own sex over the other; they had both like to have run away with too worthless fellows, and both afterwards treated two honest well-meaning men, during the time of their courtship, like dogs; and both, I imagine, for all these reasons, will be great favourites with the female part of your readers. Pollexfen and his crew very much resemble Lovelace and his Beelzebubs; and Grand-mamma Shirley is nothing else but a *second mamma* Horton; as Lord Goosecap is another Hickman.

It would take up too much time to animadvert upon all the rest of your male and female characters. I shall only observe in general,

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that you seem to have succeeded better in your subordinate ones, than in the principal; the divine Clarissa, as you justly call her, always excepted. Though some are faulty, yet many appear to be well marked and distinguished.

The third and last thing that is to be done in an epic or dramatic composition is, to inculcate some one great moral virtue, by making it the characteristic of the hero or the chief person. Thus Homer, in his *Odyssey*, proposes Ulysses as an example of prudence he professes to sing,

Τον ἀνδρα πολυτροπον.

The man for wisdom's various arts renown'd.

And Virgil, in the person of Æneas, gives an example of piety to the Gods, he sings the pious Æneas. In the same manner, in the memoirs of Sir Cha. Grandison you propose an example of benevolence, and in Pamela of chastity; you celebrate the benevolent Grandison and the chaste Pamela. I have already, in the two foregoing articles, given my opinion sufficiently of the first, and shall here say somewhat more of the latter, and enquire a little into the nature of chastity.

The influence of custom, habit, and education, over human minds is prodigious and inconceivable. It is so great and extensive, that perhaps it is utterly impossible to determine what principles or conceptions we receive
from

from nature, and what from the other sources. All women of honour and condition among civilized nations imagine, that what are called virgin delicacy and reserve, female chastity and modesty, are not only fit and proper, but natural and inherent in their sex. Fit and proper they certainly are, as the universal consent of all ages and nations shews; and besides, that fitness and propriety is founded on the nature of things, but natural and inherent they are not, as is equally manifest from experience. In ancient Greece, where the women were remarkable both for continence before marriage, and fidelity after it, customs prevailed diametrically opposite to all our most established notions of modesty and delicacy. It was customary among them, for the women to perform the offices of rubbers, sweaters, and cuppers to the men, when bathing; nor was this the employment of the servants, or female slaves, but of young ladies of the highest rank and quality. Thus, in the third *Odyssy*, when *Telemachus* is entertained at *Nestor's* palace, his youngest daughter,

*Sweet Polycaste, takes the pleasing toil,
To bathe the prince, and pour the fragrant oil,*

How would *Clarissa's* delicacy have been shock'd and disgusted, had brother *James* laid his commands upon her to rub down *Mr. Solmes*! nor would that office have been in

the least less disagreeable, had she been to perform it on the handsome person of Bob Lovelace; she would have sooner died, than have done it to either. Again, in the sixth Odyſſey, when Ulyſſes, awakened by the noiſe which Naulicaa and her nymphs make at their ſports, comes quite naked out of her hiding place; the nymphs, indeed, run away, not at the ſight of a naked man, but for fear of an enemy, while the princeſs ſtays, and, without betraying the leaſt diſguſt or uneaſineſs at his appearance, holds a long converſation with him, calls back her fugitive companions, and reprimands them very ſharply for their timorousneſs. Had ſuch an adventure, Sir, happened to your Harriet, how do you think ſhe would have behaved? ſhe who was not able, without the utmoſt palpitacion, nor unleſs her trembling hand had been guided, to ſign the marriage articles with her beloved Grandiſon. Inſtead of giving aſſiſtance to the naked hero, ſhe would have wanted help herſelf; the *dear creature* would have fainted away. Among the northern nations in America, who lead a ſimple life, and where conjugal fidelity is very ſtrictly obſerved, it is cuſtomary for parents to provide their gueſts with companions for the night in the perſons of their daughters. They reckon it a neceſſary branch of hofpitable duty; and the young ladies think themſelves affronted, if their embraces are rejected. Had Pamela and Clariſſa been bred up near the
great

great lake of Hurons, they would have gone to bed to Booby and Lovelace, without any scruple, had they come to their father's houses, in the character of English envoys; and had an Iroquois damsel received her education in Northamptonshire, under the wings of grand-mamma Shirk y, and kept company constantly with Lucy and Nancy Selby, she would have been as delicate as Harriet herself. From whence does this mighty difference proceed, among creatures of the same species, all endued with the same passions, appetites, and desires? Undoubtedly from custom, habit, and education; and the reason that women of candid and open dispositions, who can freely examine into themselves, are never sensible of it, and cannot make the discovery, is this; they feel these principles immoveably rooted in their minds, and they had received them so early, that they never remember the time when they had them not. This chastity, this delicacy, &c. may probably enough be termed political; some people have reckoned it the meer invention of the statesman or politician; but, as I observed before, its fitness and propriety are founded on the nature of things and of human society. In all societies there are families, inheritances, and distinctions of ranks and orders. To keep these separate and distinct, to prevent them from falling into confusion, on all which the good oeconomy and internal happiness of the state much depend,

pend, the chastity and continence of women are absolutely and indispensably necessary. Therefore it has been universally agreed, to educate the sex in the principles leading to that continence, and to make their honour and reputation consist in adhering to them. In women of condition, in short in all above a certain rank, the inconveniencies of deviating from these principles are always very observable, and sensibly felt; particular families are hurt, orders are confused, inheritances are uncertain, the example is bad, and the scandal great. Therefore in all such we perceive this political chastity strongly to prevail; but in the rank below them we find it, for obvious reasons, exerting no great influence. However it has so far exerted its influence, that it has universally become customary for the woman to deny, and of course it must be the prerogative of the man to ask. This has rendered a greater indulgence necessary, and introduced a greater latitude in the practice of the male sex, with respect to amours. But I am afraid they have stretched this indulgence too far, indeed far beyond what the oeconomy of nature requires, and much farther than is consistent with public utility. I may likewise add, that the fair sex have been too remiss, that they have suffered themselves to be outwitted, and allowed the other sex to carry this inequality in their manners to too great a length. Nothing certainly appears more incon-

consistent, than that the same action which brings the greatest disgrace and ruin, the utmost shame and infamy on the woman, should not at all affect the man, though the most guilty, as he is always the temptor and seducer. Nay, it is unjust to the highest degree; for compliance and weakness are the worst that can be laid to the charge of the one, whereas the other can seldom be excused from premeditated villainy. Many undergo capital punishments daily for crimes much less atrocious in their own nature, and much less destructive to the interests of Society. For what can be in itself more infamous, than to rob a creature of its most valuable possession, and then abandon it to a life of vice and a death of misery? If there be in nature a tender and delicate passion, love is certainly such. Yet how different and inconsistent is the conduct of the sexes in this article. A man who loves a woman with an honourable intention, rejects her with abhorrence, if he has a suspicion that she has been blown upon by another, especially a person of a subordinate rank. A woman again, who is addressed by the man she loves, makes no objection, and feels little uneasiness, even at the certainty of his prostituting his person to all the women of the town. Nay, if he has the reputation of having ruined two or three of rank and character, so far from hurting, that generally recommends him to her favour. These are facts incontestable, they can be

be accounted for by no principle in nature, they are quite contrary to all the maxims of delicacy, but prove at the same time the prodigious force of habit and custom. This is a thing undoubtedly wrong, and perhaps the women are rather more to blame than the men. In all general affairs, indeed, in all matters of consequence, the male sex must ever lead, and the other follow; but surely they have something in their power, were they to exert themselves. They ought never, by a silent approbation, to encourage looseness and profligacy among the men, and thus be accessory to the prostitution of numbers in the lower rank of their own sex; and if they have it not in their power to reform their gallants altogether, they can at least make them throw the mask of decency over their vices.

There is another species of chastity, which may properly enough be stiled religious, and is equally obligatory on all ranks; but is only found among those nations where the Christian system is established. The founder of our religion was himself a bright and a shining pattern of this virtue, and he and his immediate disciples recommended and enforced it strongly, both by precept and example. It was this, chiefly, that, in the first ages of the church, filled the mountains and deserts with hermits of all sexes and ages; it was this that gave rise to the religious orders of monks and nuns, and the celibacy of the clergy, which

which still subsist in Popish countries. But these consequences were pernicious to the publick good, they discouraged marriage, and established that ecclesiastical tyranny, under which all Europe groaned before the reformation and the resurrection of letters. But as these precepts and examples are now applied in protestant countries, they are useful and proper; they are only applied to recommend conjugal fidelity and continence before marriage, and thus in some measure supply the deficiencies of the political chastity, among women of the lower rank, to whom that does not extend. And even though it were to be granted, that Christianity is no divine institution, yet, on account of this and several other excellent maxims it contains and strongly enforces, in common with other religions, its divine origin ought to be inculcated on the minds of those people who can believe it. But though this kind of chastity is more comprehensive, yet its influence, as experience shews us, is infinitely weaker than that of the other. I believe it may be said, with justice, that there are fewer unchaste women, even in proportion to their numbers, among those of rank and condition, than there are chaste among these of an inferior order, though the lives of the first are generally lazy and luxurious, and much the greatest part of their reading lies among modern plays, novels and romances, which, in-

stead of curbing and restraining, have a manifest tendency to heighten and inflame their passions. All these circumstances shew the superior efficacy of the political over the religious chastity. From the nature of things it must be so, for the punishments of a future state are objects too remote to have any great weight in deterring people from yielding to the importunate solicitations of a present powerful passion. When once a woman has got the length to undervalue the immediate shame, ruin and disgrace she has to dread from being detected in an amour, religious motives never can restrain her from indulging her inclinations. Far be it from me, by any thing here said, to derogate in the least from the utility of this great and fundamental article in all religions, the commonly received doctrine of rewards and punishments in a future state. On the contrary, I am sensible of its utility in the highest degree, and that too in cases where it is most necessary, by inciting men to virtues to which no temporal rewards are annexed, and deterring them from crimes and vices, where they have no temporal punishments to dread, or where, from the secrecy of the commission, they have hopes to escape the punishments provided for them by the laws. In all cases of the last kind, thought and deliberation are required, to contrive and put them in execution; the mind is then cool, at least not transported

transported out of itself by hurrying passion, and has time and leisure to weigh and reflect on every circumstance; religious motives, no doubt, then exert their influence, awaken fears and terrors, and keep many faithful and honest, who would otherwise yield to the temptations of revenge, ambition, and interest. For these reasons, this doctrine can never be too sedulously inculcated on the minds of the people by their public teachers, nor represented to their imaginations in too lively or too affecting colours.

It is very possible, Sir, that a great deal of this philosophy may lie too deep for your conception; it is possible, that not understanding, or not being able to answer it, you may incline to fix an odium on it, and alledge, that it has an affinity with that of Hobbes and Mandevill. But granting it were so, which it is not, truth ought only to be regarded, and names to have no weight in a dispute of this kind. I wanted to say something on female chastity and delicacy, about which you and your heroines make such a rout and a pother, and I shall now apply it to examine how far your Pamela is a proper example of either. In the first place, she was not of that rank or situation in life which could entitle her to those notions of honour and virtue, which are extremely proper and becoming in Clarissa or Harriet. In the next place, the principles which she imbibed from her religious educa-

tion under Booby's lady mother never could have been sufficient to preserve her virtue, as it is called, had it been properly besieged. No doubt their may have been servant girls who have withstood the earnest solicitations of great 'squires, their masters; but then they have either disliked the persons, their affections have been pre-engaged, or, like Pamela, they have had a Booby to deal with. In short, your whole atchievement, in your first performance, amounts to no more than this; by giving so circumstantial an account of Booby's fruitless operations, you have pointed out to young gentlemen, who may have the same designs, the quite contrary method, by which they may assuredly promise themselves better success.

Nor even do I think Bob Lovelace himself, who glories so much in intrigue, a very formidable man among the ladies, if we except his potions and his doses of opium, which an apothecary's 'prentice could have managed better than either mother Sinclair or him. He possibly might have taken all the freedoms he did with Clarissa, except the last shocking one, and not offended her half so much, if he had ordered his conduct otherwise. But you seem to have a notion, at least you represent your heroes acting as if nothing could be done with women, but by down-right bribery and corruption, and by teasing and terrifying them out of their senses. You are however mistaken;
 women

women are never mercenary in their amours, until they are totally debauched, and prostitution has become their trade, and many not even then, where they like their man. The youngest and most artless of them all know, that when money is offered beforehand they are treated like prostitutes, a character which they naturally hate and despise, they are sensible their man entertains the same sentiments of them, and they as naturally hate and despise him for doing so. Neither is the greatest success to be expected from putting them in ill humour, and keeping their tempers constantly on the fret; surely more is to be done when their hearts are at ease, their fears asleep, and their minds softened by sympathizing love and tenderness. At the same time there is a due medium between an abject whiner, and an obstinate insulting teaser, which characters women know well how to distinguish; they despise the one, and they hate the other: all your lovers are of these kinds; Hickman and Lord Gooscap of the first; Lovelace and Booby, when he put on his *stately airs* after the summer-house adventure, of the last. You have not been able to describe an agreeable, artful, and accomplish'd seducer, who, without raising fears and terrors, could melt, surprize, or reason a woman out of her virtue. It is well you have not, for such a character could do no good, and might do a great deal of mischief. Nay, there is reason to fear, that
the

the characters you have already drawn, whatever your intentions may be, have not quite so innocent a tendency as you imagine.

Having now enquired into the merit of your compositions, with respect to the manner of their execution, I shall next proceed to examine what tendency their subject, or the matter contained in them, has to promote chastity, modesty, and delicacy; virtues, the advancement of which I believe you have sincerely at heart. You and I, perhaps, entertain quite different notions about their nature and origin; but while we are agreed as to their utility and fitness, and that the conduct of both sexes ought to be more under the influence of these principles than it generally is, we need not trouble ourselves about such abstract speculations; so that it is to be hoped we shall reason henceforth upon common principles, and the natural and necessary connection between causes and effects. Love, eternal Love, is the subject, the burthen of all your writings; it is the poignant sauce, which so richly seasons Pamela, Clarissa and Grandison, and makes their flimzy nonsense pass so glibly down. Love, eternal love, not only seasons all our other numerous compositions of the same kind, but likewise engrosses our theatres and all our dramatic performances, which were originally calculated to give examples of nobler passions. From this situation of affairs among our authors, one would be apt to imagine, that the
pro-

propagation of the species was at a stand, and that, not to talk of marrying and giving in marriage, there was hardly any such thing as fornication going forward among us, and that therefore our publick-spirited penmen, to prevent the world from coming to an end, employ'd all their art and eloquence to keep people in remembrance, that they were compos'd of different sexes. But provident nature has rendered all their endeavours unnecessary, nay, she has rather erred, if I may be allowed the expression, in making that passion already too strong of itself. She has rather implanted too many allurements, and has affixed too great a variety of pleasures to the intercourse between the sexes, and has likewise allow'd that passion to display itself much sooner than is consistent either with the good of society, or the happiness of individuals. Therefore I must always maintain, that those writings which heighten and inflame the passion, which paint in lively colours the endearments between the sexes, are of a bad and pernicious tendency, and do much more evil than they can possibly do good, especially to the young and amorous, whose appetites are by nature furious and ungovernable. Your writings are all evidently of this kind, and fall within this censure in the strongest manner; and none of your brother romancers are, in my opinion, entirely free from it, except the moral and ingenious authorefs of David Simple. Indeed, if they employed

employed what power they may have to raise the passions, and made use of the possession they have got of the public ear, to inculcate patriotism, the love of a country, and other public and private virtues, which perhaps were never scarcer than at present, they would in that case be as much to be commended, as they now ought to be blamed.

Many, Sir, share equally in this guilt with you; however, it is not the less for being divided; but if this were all, you might pass undistinguished in the general censure. There is one species of iniquity, for so I must call it, in which you so much excel, in which you have acquired a pre-eminence so conspicuous, that all other writers, when you appear, must hide their diminished heads, like stars before the sun: that consists in drawing characters the most shockingly vicious, and giving examples of villainy the most infamous, and by that means instructing the ignorant and innocent in the theory of crimes, which, without a thorough knowledge of the town, they could never have suspected human nature to have been capable of. Any one who remembers the correspondence between Lovelace and Belford, and what passes in that infernal brothel, to which Clarissa was conducted, will at once perceive what I have in view. Equally admirable and just is this aphorism of our noble and inimitable poet.

Vice.

*Vice is a monster of so frightful mien,
As to be hated needs but to be seen;
But seen too oft, familiar with her face,
We first endure, then pity, then embrace.*

The truth of this is confirmed, both by experience and the nature of things. The hearts of men are very corruptible, especially where there is an incitement from a natural passion; when they hear an unexampled piece of villainy, they are at first shocked, but if they dwell much upon it, they are at last familiarized to it, they are ingenious at inventing excuses for that to which they find an inclination, and at last feel less remorse at the actual commission, than they had conceived horror at the bare recital. But Mr. Pope is a Poet, and as you entertain no great affection for the tuneful tribe, perhaps his authority may have little weight; you are, however, a staunch believer, and an excellent *Bible-scholar*; I shall therefore try the efficacy of a scriptural inference. *Moses*, in his celebrated apologue of the fall, has introduced a fanciful imaginary scene, which he calls paradise; he has placed there a human couple, under the name of *Adam* and *Eve*; he supposes them created in a state of innocence and happiness, and prohibited to eat of one tree in the garden, which he calls the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, under the penalty of being subjected to death and misery; but that, being

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tempted

tempted by the serpent, they eat of this tree, and are driven out of Paradise. Many and various allegorical interpretations have been given of this fable, but the following, which has been adopted by some of the most eminent of the primitive fathers, and our modern divines, pleases me best, and seems most agreeable to the intention of the author. It is said, that by Adam we are to understand the mind or reason of man; by Eve, the flesh or outward senses; and by the serpent, lust or pleasure. This allegory, we are told, clearly explains the true causes of man's fall and degeneracy, when his mind, through the weakness and treachery of his senses, became captivated and seduced by the allurements of lust and pleasure, he was driven by God out of Paradise; that is, lost and forfeited the happiness and prosperity which he had enjoyed in his innocence. This interpretation is certainly very ingenious, and conveys a noble and a beautiful moral; but I am of opinion, that, without straining it in the least, it may be carried a good deal farther, and that Moses, by prohibiting his imaginary pair to taste of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, intended to warn men against, and shew them the dangerous consequences of, an idle curiosity and researches into vain and useless Things, and to make them sensible, that all they could acquire thereby would be pain and misery, the necessary consequences of the loss of virtue and

and innocence, and a shameful sense of their own nakedness; that is, the corruption and depravity of human nature. This interpretation is not only deducible in a very obvious manner from the fable itself, but is likewise agreeable to experience. It is certain, that an ignorance of vice is, with great numbers, the best, and sometimes the only preservative against it, and that a simple and rural life is the proper soil wherein every virtue flourishes. Neither is such a state incompatible with the improvement of mankind in natural and moral philosophy, or their advancement in all the valuable arts and sciences.

The application of this doctrine to you is very obvious. Not to mention many faulty scenes in your *Grandison* and *Pamela*, several volumes of your *Clarissa* contain nothing else but a minute and circumstantial detail of the most shocking vices and villainous contrivances, transacted in the most infamous of places, and by the most infamous characters, and all to satisfy the brutal and the sensual appetite. Thus you act the part of the serpent, and not only throw out to men the tempting suggestions of lust and pleasure, but likewise instruct the weak head and the corrupt heart in the methods how to proceed to their gratification. That is, you tempt them to swallow the forbidden fruit of the tree which they were commanded not to eat; I mean the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. This is a

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heavy,

heavy, and indeed the principal charge against you; and I shall now condemn, or, if you please, judge you out of your own mouth. Lady G. in the letter she wrote to Harriet, just as she was setting out for Northamptonshire, to witness her happy nuptials with Grandison, has this remarkable passage.

Let me whisper you Harriet—sure you proud maiden minxes think—But I did once—I wonder in my heart oftentimes—But men and women are cheats to one another. But we may in a great measure thank the poetical tribe for the fascination. I hate them all. Are they not inflammers of the worst passions? With regard to Epics, would Alexander, madman as he was, have been so much a madman had it not been for Homer? Of what violences, murders, depredations, have not the Epic Poets been the occasion, by propagating false honour, false glory, and false religion? Those of the amorous class ought in all ages (could their future geniuses for tinkling sound and measure have been known) to have been strangled in their cradles. Abusers of talents given them for better purposes (for all this time I put sacred poesy out of the question) and avowedly claiming a right to be licentious, and to overleap the bounds of decency, truth and nature.

What a rant! (a rant indeed, Charlotte) how came these fellows into my rambling head? O I remember my whisper to you led me into all this stuff.

Well,

Well, and you at last recollect the trouble you have given my brother about you. Good Girl! Had I remembered that, I would have spared you my reflections on the poets and poetasters of all ages, the truly inspired ones (who are these, my dear) excepted. And yet I think the others should have been banished our commonwealth as well as Plato's. So it seems we are to have a female republic, of which I suppose these *Varleteffes* Harriet and Charlotte will be *Consuleffes*.

There is good reason to believe that her lively ladyship speaks here your own sentiments, but what you can understand by sacred poesy is, I confess, above my comprehension. Does it consist in celestial ballads, holy madrigals, spiritual garlands, or bellmen's verses? for I hardly know any other species of sacred poesy in our language, our religion being the most unpoetical in the world; so that a sacred subject can never appear with any grace, dignity, or beauty in a poem. I have already declared my opinion very explicitly about amorous writers, whether in prose or verse; but if the sentence which the *dear flighty creature* passes upon them all, without distinction, could have been executed, what must have become of her good friend Mr. Samuel Richardson. He too is a poet, for though he does not write in verse, yet he draws characters, and deals in fiction, and is besides one of the most amorous poets in the world; he does not indeed paint
a Chloe

a Chloe or a Sachuriffa in an ivy bower, or a shady grove, there is something of delicacy in that ; but he represents all the preparations to the good work, and the good work itself, going forward, in a downright honest manner, among whores and rakes, in brothels and bagnios. He not only raises the passions, but kindly points out the readiest and the easiest way to lay them. That man must have a very philosophical constitution, indeed, who does not find himself moved by several descriptions, particularly that luscious one, which Bob Lovelace gives of Clarissa's person, when he makes the attempt on her virtue, after the adventure of the fire. Not that I think any genius is required for such an achievement ; nature, with the least hint, is more than sufficient for the purpose ; few good writers have attempted such things, and the very worst have succeeded. However, the passions of the reader being now raised, his next business is to satisfy them ; and he cannot but reflect that this virtuous scene passes in a brothel, where, though Clarissa may be impregnable, unless a dose of opium be first administered, there are such girls as Sally Martin and Polly Horton ; but they not being *every man's girls*, as Bob Lovelace tells us, and our adventurer, perhaps, not having money, address, or patience, to come to the *ultimatum* with those first-rate ladies of pleasure, he very sagely concludes, that one woman is as good as another, especially as the
same

same Bob Lovelace, so experienced in the ways of women, informs him, that *that prime gift differs only in its external customary visibles*, and that *the skull of Philip is no better than another man's*, he very contentedly resolves to take up with Dorcas Wykes, or the first *ready non-apparent* he can meet with in *the outer house*. Accordingly our amorous youth sallies forth, fully bent to enjoy Clarissa in imagination; but before he has got half way to mother Sinclair's, he meets a pretty girl in the streets, who invites him to a glass of wine, and the next tavern stands open for their reception. This is the natural catastrophe of a serious perusal of the fire-adventure; and I believe it has ended this way much oftener than in any good way. Thus if her flighty Ladyship would be impartial in the execution of her sentence, we may easily conjecture what would become of Samuel Richardson, at least of his works.

Let me whisper you, Charlotte.—Ought not this writer of the amorous class (could his future genius for loose and lascivious description have been known) to have been strangled in his cradle?—I see the charming archness rising in your eyes, which makes one both love you and fear you.—Yet you look meditatively—Tell me, thou dear flighty creature—Am I not right?—Very right, Sir.—Huzzah, Sam.—well said—that's a good girl—give me a buss for that, Hussy—Heyday, SIRR—Who allows you these liberties, SIRR!—I take them, Charlotte.—Do
not

*not think you have wemmell'd me quite—so none of your scrupulosities with me Varletess—but oh! what an eye-beam was there,—she has soul-barrow'd me by her frowns,—yet her anger may slide off on its own ice.—Then hey for lady Goosecap,—O Jack, the charmingest bosom, ever mine eyes beheld. * * * * **

This is a small specimen of the manner and stile *Richardsonian*, *that is my word*, so greatly and so justly admired by the present age, with which, no less than eighteen large volumes are stuffed from beginning to end. But to return to our argument.

You have been already found fault with for the shocking description Jack Belford gives of that levy of damsels who attended mother Sinclair on her death-bed, such a scene must certainly be shocking enough, yet could not be near so much on the part of the ladies as is represented; but it must be remembered, that Jackey had then *got into his Horribles*, as Bob terms it, and, as Bays has it, he rounded it off egad. I have one great objection to all such descriptions which is implied in the verses above cited from Mr. Pope, but there is another and a greater against this, that it is contrary to truth. Few, or none of our English ladies of pleasure exercise the mystery of painting, and bating the odoriferous particles of gin, which sometimes exhale from their breaths, there are many of them, without any disparagement, as little flatterly in their persons, as most other fine ladies in a morning.

morning; indeed, if such descriptions had the same effect on the minds of youth, that raw-head and bloody-bones have upon children, to frighten them from the objects they ought to shun they might be of some service, but when upon trial they find them better than they have been taught to believe them, they are apt to imagine them not so bad as they really are.

Let us now return to *the dear flighty creature*, and the sentence which she passes upon the Poets. She has a fling at Homer, whom the beauteous Harriet, in her dispute with the university pedant, had before criticized upon in a masterly manner, and like a good Englishwoman, from the authority of her godfather Deane, concluded, that our Milton has excelled him in the sublimity of his images, this, is a controversy which I shall not enter into, with so lovely a disputant, whose eyes, whatever her lips may be, are always in the right. We are asked, *would Alexander, madman as he was, have been so much a madman, had it not been for Homer, of what violences, murders, depredations, have not the Epic poets been the occasion, by propagating false honour, false glory, and false Religion?* These remarks are, I suppose, occasioned by the great veneration which the Macedonian hero professed for Homer's writings, and by his famous imitation, or rather improvement, on the cruelty of Achilles, in dragging round the walls of a conquered city its brave defender. But may it not be asked with equal, if not greater propriety,

propriety, would many profligate and abandoned, as they naturally are, be so very profligate and abandoned, were it not for Richardson? And, of what rapes, violences, and debaucheries, have not the Romance writers been the occasion, by propagating false love, false chastity, and false, I shall not add religion, 'till you, who are so well qualified, have demonstrated which is the true one? If Alexander exceeded Achilles in cruelty, may not many go beyond Lovelace in that, as well as in debauchery? None but such as Alexander have ever proposed to imitate Achilles, but every man of a moderate fortune may set up Lovelace for a pattern, by whom to model his conduct. Should it be said, that in Lovelace, Richardson gives the example of a man, who brought ruin and destruction on himself by his vices, and that he constantly expresses the utmost abhorrence of his bad morals, with equal, nay, with greater justice, must not the same be said of Homer? Nay, as it happens, he expresses in his own person a thing not usual with him, his disapprobation in the strongest terms, of Achilles's barbarous usage of Heistor's dead Body, that piece of cruelty which Alexander particularly imitated.

Ἐτορὰ διὸν αἰνέει μὴδετο ἐργα are his words, when he introduces the narration of that event. No doubt Homer's writings have been, and may be abused, and so may the best and most useful of all human inventions; religion itself has not escaped,

escaped, and its abuse has been ever attended with the most pernicious and destructive consequences. But surely they are not so liable to be abused as your compositions; Homer, indeed, describes vicious characters, but all their viciousness consists in the natural passions being carried to a blameable excess, he paints no improvement, no refinement, no elaborate contrivance in villany, this is what you excell in, above all the authors antient or modern, I remember to have read. The anger of Achilles was raised by a most provoking insult which he received from Agamemnon. He thus expresses himself:

*My maid, my black-ey'd maid be forc'd away,
Due to the toils of many a dreadful Day,
From me be forc'd her, me, the bold and brave,
Disgrac'd, dishonour'd, like the vilest slave.*

What could be more natural than a resentment on such an occasion? And what could be more natural, than for a man of Achilles's temper to carry that resentment too far? Both he and Agamemnon suffer severely for the errors they commit; and what renders the fable still more beautiful, and the moral still more instructive, is this consideration, that their sufferings appear to be the unavoidable and necessary consequences of their errors; of course, nothing can more effectually deter others in similar circumstances from being guilty of the like faults for

the future. But the oeconomy of your plot, and the disposition of your characters, are entirely different. Lovelace determines on the ruin of Clarissa, from motives and passions altogether unnatural, which could subsist no where, but in a heart debauched of itself, initiated in all the mysteries of villany, and regularly educated in an academy of wickedness; his motives and passions are an aversion to marriage, a resentment against Clarissa's family, an infamous resolution to wreak his revenge on the only person in it, who loved him; a ridiculous doubt of her virtue, and a vain-glorious pride, in having a reputation for intrigue, and adding an honourable name to a list, which it seems he kept, of the credulous fools he had already ruined, and the tricks which he put in practice, to bring about that diabolical end, are all uniformly of a piece with the motives and passions which inspired them; nor is the matter in the least mended by the catastrophe which ensues; for it is not the necessary and unavoidable consequence of his committed crimes, you are at the greatest pains to let us know so much out of his own mouth: *Who could have thought it*, says he to his friend Belford, *I have said it a thousand times, surely there never can be such another woman*; thus, you must be sensible you have entirely destroyed the moral, and any good effect that could be expected from the example; for, if there never can be such another woman as Clarissa, and such a catastrophe

is not again to be dreaded, there is nothing to deter another Rake from putting in practice the same infamous schemes, upon any other woman he may happen to have in his power.

Thus far, Sir, have I carried the parallel between Homer and you, with respect to the moral tendency of your works, a parallel in any other view, you yourself must be sensible would be ridiculous. Were I to extend it farther, it would still conclude more to your disadvantage, but I think enough is said to convince any impartial person, that if the one, with the smallest appearance of justice, was denied an admission into the Platonic commonwealth, the other would have been kick'd out of it with shame and disgrace; yet, you have very pleasantly contrived to find a place there for yourself, in Homer's room. You have adopted and inserted in your *Clarissa* the four following verses, of a poetical encomium which was made upon it.

*Even Plato in Lyceum's awful shade,
Th' instructive page, with transport had survey'd,
And own'd its author, to have well supplied,
The place, his laws, to Homer's self denied.*

Under these lines we have this note. By the laws of Plato's commonwealth, Homer was denied a place there, on account of the bad tendency of the morals he ascribes to his Gods and his Heroes; but from the short parallel I have

have drawn, let the impartial determine whose writings have the worst tendency. I know nothing of your poet Laureate, therefore shall say as little of him, but I cannot tell which most to wonder at, your own ignorance or vanity, the last is conspicuous in numberless other places as well as this, the first is scarce less so. Tho' you have mention'd Plato's commonwealth oftener than once in your works, yet, it appears that you know nothing of its nature or constitution, by which it was rendered impossible, for such characters as you describe, to have either an existence, or an admission into that imaginary republic. The pride of wealth in the Harlow family, and the pride of titles and descent in the Lovelace family, can no where be found, save, in a monarchial and commercial state, where there is a hereditary noblesse, and a great inequality among the fortunes of the citizens. Neither can such characters as Lovelace and his associates, or mother Sinclair and her nymphs, display themselves, or such a place as the mother's brothel, subsist any where but in a city like London, the overgrown metropolis of a powerful Empire, and an extensive commerce; all these corruptions, are the necessary and unavoidable consequences of such a constitution of things. In order to prevent which, Plato made the basis of his republic consist in a perfect equality of the citizens, both with respect to honours and estates, and to banish commerce, in his opinion, the other great corrupter

corrupter of the morals of a people, forever from the state; he supposes that his city is built in an inland country, at a distance from the Ocean or Sea-ports. I shall not pretend to justify Plato in all his whims; but it is certain, that if such an establishment were practicable, every public and private virtue would have a better chance to flourish there, than in any other State, where different principles prevail. From these circumstances it is manifest, that if we could suppose a Platonic citizen, entirely unacquainted with what passes in the world, beyond the verges of his own republic, he would imagine, if such a book as *Clarissa* was recommended to his perusal, that the characters described in it were monsters, not men, and existed no where, except in the depraved fancy of its author.

Here, Sir, I put a period to my general remarks on your compositions; I cannot say they are thrown altogether into a regular order, but they may do well enough in a loose essay, as this is intended to be. It would require a bulky volume to contain remarks on all the passages which deserve it, whether it were to point out innumerable faults, or some few shining beauties. I am not equal to the task, and, though I were, should not undertake it. Had you wrote nothing else, *Pamela* would have been consigned, long before now, to utter neglect and oblivion. Such soon will be the fate of *Grandison*, admired and sought after

after as it is at present. People must some time or other tire of conning over such quantities of flimzy stuff. I wonder at their present patience and perseverance, and can never sufficiently admire the contexture of that brain which can weave with unwearied toil such immense webs of idle tittle-tattle, and gossiping nonsense. Clarissa perhaps deserves a better fate.

Great are its faults, but glorious is its flame, may not improperly be said of it, as has been said of Shakespear's Othello.

It must be owned, you have fallen upon a manner of writing, in a series of Letters, which is very affecting, and capable of great improvements. It preserves a great probability in the narration, and makes every thing appear animated and impassioned. It is to be regretted, that you have trifled so egregiously as you have done; you are one of those who, having an exuberant genius, and little judgment, never know when they have said enough. The manner in which you have published your pieces is a proof of this; Pamela came out first in two volumes, and was then compleat, however two more were afterwards added; Clarissa made her first appearance in seven volumes, and there are now eight; and Grandison, I suppose, will in a short time be improved in the same manner. This conduct, Sir, may at first encrease the profits of authorship, but in the end will always destroy the credit

credit of the author. There never was a good writer yet, who blotted not out ten lines for one that he added. It has been said of Virgil, that when composing, he used to dictate a great many lines in the morning, and employ the rest of the day in reducing them to a small number. It was said in commendation of Shakespear, that he never blotted a line; Ben Johnson replied, he wished he had blotted a thousand, in which I believe every body now concurs with him. Homer alone seems to be an exception to this rule, in all his writings there are so much ease and nature, that I can hardly think he either blotted or corrected, his verses appear to have been wholly dictated by the inspired Muse herself. But you, Sir, are not a Homer, and are besides totally ignorant of that art, without the frequent exercise of which no other authors have ever attained to a great and lasting reputation, I mean the art of blotting judiciously, and lopping off superfluities and excrescences, without tenderness or remorse. Instead of adding one volume to *Clarissa*, as originally printed, had you taken three away, it might have been made a valuable performance. The best, perhaps, the only way to correct *Grandison* and *Pamela*, would be to make them pass thro' the fire.

To conclude, I think your writings have corrupted our language and our taste; that the composition of them all, except *Clarissa*, is bad; and

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that they all, particularly that, have a manifest tendency to corrupt our morals. I have likewise shewn that ~~your~~ principal characters are all, except Clarissa's, faulty, ridiculous, or unmeaning. Grandison is an inconsistent angel, Lovelace is an absolute devil, and Booby is a perfect ass; Pamela is a little pert minx, whom any man of common sense or address might have had on his own terms in a week or a fortnight, Harriet appears to be every thing, and yet may be nothing, except a ready scribe, a verbose letter-writer; and as to Clarissa, I believe you will own yourself, that I have done you ample justice. I now leave you seriously to contemplate the merit of your performances, and shall only add, that I hope you will have the candour not to impute these animadversions to any spiteful envy conceived at your great reputation and extraordinary success; yet, this I will say, that some expressions might perhaps have been pointed with less severity, had I not observed that your constant endeavours are to render a certain set of men amongst us, the objects of public hatred and detestation; for any thing you know to the contrary they may be in the right, and you in the wrong, at least, as I told you before, you are no proper judge in the controversy, whether they are or not. At any rate this conduct of yours must proceed either from a weakness of the head, or a badness of the heart. A weakness in the head, that your understanding still continues blinded with

with all those prejudices, in their full strength, which you imbibed in the years of your childhood, from the old women in the nursery. A badness of the heart, that makes you imagine any difference in opinions. merely speculative, ever can give just occasion to an unfavourable distinction among members of the same society, partakers of the same human nature, and children of one common indulgent Parent, the almighty and beneficent Creator of all things.

I am, &c. W

P O S T S C R I P T.

AFTER having animadverted warmly, yet, I hope, justly, upon one author, a worthy and virtuous man, as I believe, for shewing an indiscreet zeal in behalf of a religion, in the profession of which he is undoubtedly sincere; it would be an unpardonable neglect, to take no notice of another author, a daily journalist too, whose sincerity at the best is dubious, but whose zeal, whether real or pretended, flames out beyond all the bounds of order or decency. The zeal of Richardson, when weigh'd against the zeal, or rather the fury of Hill, *would be found wanting, and as dust in the balance.* The Inspectors which have given occasion to this

postscript, are those of Saturday the 9th, and Wednesday the 13th of this present month of February; neither of which had made its appearance before the foregoing remarks were compleated and sent to the press. In these the journalist has done his utmost, not only to prejudice weak minds against Lord Bolingbroke's posthumous works, and the Essays on Crucifixion, Fainting Fits, Resurrections and Miracles, proposals for printing which by subscription have been lately published; but to raise the furies of religious rage and persecution against the editor of the one, and the author of the other. He tells the first, that *were he a robber and a murderer, he would be less criminal, less worthy capital punishment and the Detestation of all Mankind.* He declares *he shall do all a private man can do to bring him to punishment.* Of the last he says, that *not the religious alone, but all who have wisdom, and a sense of decency, join to say, that no punishment can be too severe for him:* And, after having given some charitable hints, drawn from the death of Socrates, and the practice of the Heathens, he thus apostrophizes. *Will Christians suffer what they could not bear? It cannot be: It is not possible. Laws will be put in execution, and the histories of the whole world cannot produce a greater criminal.*

The bare recital of these distempered ravings is a sufficient confutation of them, is sufficient to inspire all men of sense and common

mon humanity with a detestation for them, and a contempt for their author. This is not the language of a protestant writer, but of a furious blood-thirsty popish inquisitor. That he would be gladly invested with such a character, and that he would act most furiously and bloodily in it, is evident from his journals; but that he is only a private man, and even as such his influence small, is surely a happy circumstance for our native country.

Should it be enquired, what has given occasion to this flaming manifestation of popish zeal, the candid reader would undoubtedly be surprized, should he be told, that one article is, a random and incredible report, concerning Lord Bolingbroke's expected posthumous works, that their design is to prove, *there is no human soul, no deity, no spirit, and nothing but matter in the universe.* Whoever is acquainted with his lordship's writings, which have already been published; whoever knows that Mr. Pope was indebted to him for the plan of the noblest poem extant in any language, I mean his Essay on Man, must at once be convinced, from ocular demonstration, of the infamous falshood of this assertion. That his lordship was a theist, and a disbeliever in miracles and revelations, cannot and need not be denied. But that he was no atheist, no materialist, his acknowledged good sense is, alone, a sufficient proof. I do think scepticism the best and truest philosophy; and I scruple
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not to own, I have called in question, one time or other, the truth of most things which cannot be demonstrated. But the existence of spirit and deity was never one of those things. Of this I am certain, from consciousness, from reason, from demonstration. But I have often doubted the real existence of matter; for this I have not even the testimony of my senses, only prejudice and instinct. It is only such a philosopher as our inspector, who believes animals are mere machines, who can be an atheist and a materialist.

The other article which has given an opportunity to our Jesuitical journalist to flame forth with the true spirit of a popish inquisitor, is, the publication of proposals for printing by subscription, *Essays on Crucifixion; Syncope, or Fainting-Fits; the uncertainty of the signs of Death, and the real nature and frequency of those Accidents which have been called Resurrections from the Dead; and on Miracles, their Nature, and the Evidence for them.* There is surely nothing, either in this title or the proposals themselves, which appears to have a pernicious tendency against any religious establishment whatsoever; and he, surely, must be endued with a wonderful penetration, who can discover any thing like it in them. They seem only to promise medical and philosophical enquiries into medical and philosophical subjects. Why may not an essay on Crucifixion be as harmless as a dissertation on

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Tar-Water? and what destructive consequences can attend a treatise on Fainting-Fits and counterfeited Death, more than a treatise on broken heads or bloody noses? They are all physical subjects, and fall within the province of a medical writer, which it is to be supposed the author of the proposals is, otherwise he cannot be equal to the task he has undertaken. But our admirable and sagacious inspector thus addresses the public, *'Tis palpable, 'tis evident,* says he, *that this man means to tell you, the Saviour of the world did not die upon the cross; that he did not rise from the dead; that he did not work miracles.* I shall only observe, that the words Jesus, Christianity, or even Religion, are not so much as once mentioned in these proposals, and probably may not be found in the work itself, when it appears. Hence we may reasonably infer, that the world is indebted for these discoveries to the wonderful acuteness of the Inspectorial nostrils, which can smell out irreligion and infidelity, where no such things are intended, or even dreamt of. If such, indeed, are the intentions of this proposer, he is, doubtless, greatly obliged to his good friend, the Inspector, or rather the would-be inquisitor, for discovering to the public what it seems he himself either would not, or durst not, so much as hint at. But 'tis malice, 'tis fiction all, and 'tis most probable, the author himself never had any such things in his thoughts.

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But to be serious, for the subject requires it; too much detestation, too much abhorrence, can never be shewn for the principles and practices of this journalist, and they can never be sufficiently exposed and exploded. If he is not sincere, if he makes religion only a stalking horse, to gratify his passions, his pride, his vanity, his ambition, or his interest, there never was a character more infamous, more detestable. If he is sincere, his principles are equally destructive, equally pernicious, to all the most valuable interests of civil government and social life. I would incline to the more favourable interpretation; but, without any breach of charity, it may be said, that his dirty interest is one of his great motives for such a conduct. In a late famous letter of his, where, in so many words, he affirms, that *no other, unless he be conjured from the dead, is qualified to be Keeper of Sir Hans Sloane's Museum, except himself*, he thus addresses the Chancellor: *My Lord, I shall conclude with saying that, to his grace of Canterbury, I hope that respect I have, in all my writings, shewn to the religion of my country, will prove some recommendation.* Here the cloven foot manifestly appears; and, do doubt, he greedily laid hold of these proposals, to display, at this seasonable juncture, that *recommending* respect to the religion of his country, which he imagined, though perhaps erroneously, was intended to be attacked.

F I N I S.